

University Avenue Business Outreach Survey



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Future of University Avenue*

City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development

These are exciting times for University Avenue! More than 30 major development projects are recently completed, underway, or planned along the five mile length of the Avenue, stretching from the Capitol to the Minneapolis border. Many businesses are making major investments in business operations and building improvements. The University Avenue corridor is one of the major economic engines in Saint Paul. We believe a coming investment in public infrastructure, light rail transit (LRT), will make University Avenue an even better place to do business.

Planning for the construction of LRT down the middle of University Avenue is progressing. The state legislature recently allocated \$5 million to begin preliminary design and engineering. Although actual construction must await federal approvals and

the allocation of additional federal and state dollars, we believe the construction of LRT will begin within five years.

The City is very interested in reaching out to the businesses along University Avenue, to hear what you like and don't like about doing business on the Avenue, and how it could be improved. We also want to hear your ideas and concerns about the construction and operation of LRT on University Avenue. As part of this effort, we are attempting to survey every business on University by the end of 2005.

Thank you for participating in this survey! It will be very helpful to our efforts to improve University Avenue as a great place to do business.

* (from the letter to businesses that accompanied the survey)



Executive Summary

With the development of Light Rail Transit (LRT) on University Avenue coming closer to a reality, it is especially important to reach out to the 1,000+ businesses along the Avenue. From September to November of 2005, the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED), working in cooperation with the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, the Midway Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Corridor Partnership, attempted to contact and survey all of the businesses along University Avenue through personal visits, phone calls, and by mail. The purpose of the business survey was to establish a positive rapport with the businesses on the Avenue, listen to individual business concerns, and also inform owners about LRT.

The businesses were divided into two groups – those with storefronts on the Avenue, and those located in large office buildings along the Avenue. A mailer that included the survey and basic information about LRT was sent to all businesses with a University address. PED staff personally visited the storefront businesses to collect completed surveys, or complete the survey by interviewing the business owners. Business owners in the large office buildings were asked to complete the survey and mail it back to PED. A survey completion rate of 51% was achieved for the storefront businesses. For the businesses in the large office buildings, such as Court International, Griggs Midway, and Spruce Tree Center, the survey completion rate was 7%. A total of 253 surveys were completed.

Survey Highlights

(please refer to the full report for complete results)

- 61% of businesses lease their space and 39% own their properties.
- 63% of businesses reported that their customers come from more than 3 miles away.
- 40% of businesses have plans to expand in the next 3 years.
- The top three concerns cited by owners about their business' current location were parking (mentioned by 39%), litter/graffiti/vandalism (mentioned by 31%), and robbery or other serious crime (mentioned by 27%).
- When asked to comment on the possibility of LRT, 47% mentioned concerns about difficult access for customers during construction, and 27% mentioned concern about the potential elimination of on-street parking after construction.
- 95% of businesses are either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with doing business on University Avenue.
- Based upon their comments, survey staff categorized business owners' general attitudes towards LRT. 28% of owners responded favorably toward LRT, 50% were ambiguous or had some concerns and questions; and 17% were definitely opposed to LRT.

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Chapter One

Introduction

With the development of Light Rail Transit (LRT) on University Avenue coming closer to a reality, it is especially important to reach out to the 1,000+ businesses along the Avenue. From September to November of 2005, the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, working in cooperation with the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, the Midway Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Corridor Partnership, attempted to contact and survey all of the businesses along University Avenue through personal visits, phone calls, and by mail. The purpose of the business survey was to establish a positive rapport with the businesses on the Avenue, listen to individual business concerns, and also inform owners about LRT.

Background on University Avenue

University Avenue in St. Paul extends five miles from the Minnesota State Capitol north of downtown St. Paul to Emerald Street, which is the border between Minneapolis and St. Paul. University Avenue is the spine of the so-called “Central Corridor,” which in Saint Paul has an estimated population of over 33,000 people and 35,000 jobs. The corridor is made up of a diverse mix of industrial, commercial, and residential uses. Much of the industrial use is concentrated on the western end, the middle section includes the Midway regional shopping area, and the eastern end is home to a growing Asian small business community.



University Avenue is one of the busiest transportation corridors in St. Paul, and its critical location connects the downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis as well as the University of Minnesota. In addition to containing one of the state's busiest auto intersections at Snelling, University Avenue also has one of the highest transit riderships in the metro area. With over 1,000 businesses on the Avenue and a major regional shopping area in Midway, University Avenue is also a major economic asset to the region. University Avenue has become the focus of new development in St. Paul, with over 30 development projects recently completed or underway. With the addition of a proposed Light Rail Transit line, University Avenue is set to undergo a significant transition—one that will position it as a major economic growth engine for St. Paul and the region.

Chapter Two

Central Corridor and Light Rail Transit

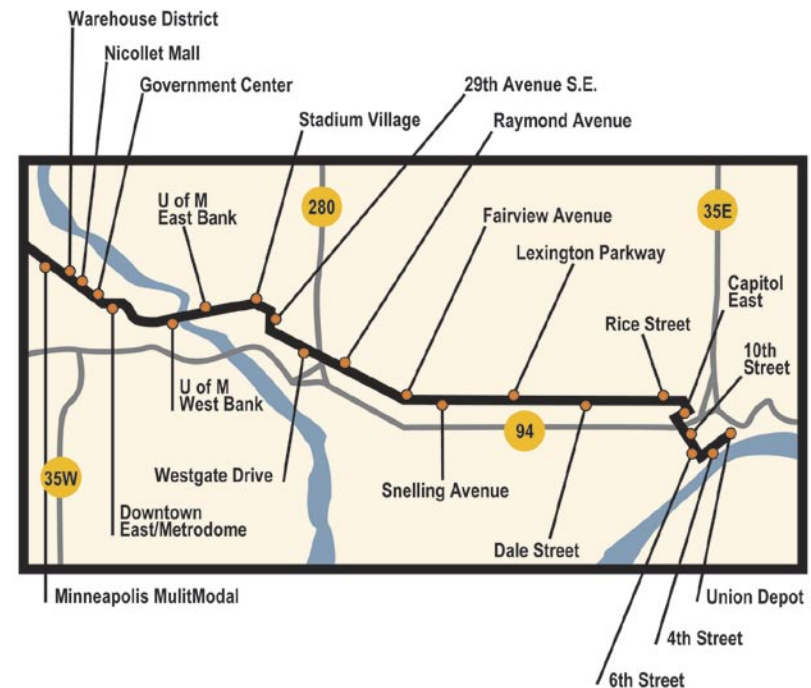


The Central Corridor is the 11-mile transportation corridor that connects downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul and includes the five-mile stretch of University Avenue through St. Paul (see figure to right). Many different major institutions, residential districts, and businesses depend on the Central Corridor for transportation.

The corridor, which also includes Interstate-94, is becoming increasingly congested with automobile traffic. Transportation planners estimate that by 2020 over 200,000 cars will clog I-94 each day. In addition, growth and development along University Avenue promises to bring even more people, businesses, and automobiles to the area, further increasing congestion. The Central Corridor has been under consideration for transit improvement for over 20 years, but little has been done to improve transportation options in the corridor.

Preliminary planning and engineering will soon begin for a proposed Light Rail Transit line to be built on University Avenue. The proposed line will connect with the Hiawatha LRT line in downtown Minneapolis and run down University Avenue into downtown St. Paul, where it will connect with a proposed multi-modal transportation hub in Union Depot. The line will consist of two dedicated rails in the center of University Avenue on which short, quiet, electric rail cars like that of the Hiawatha line would run. According to current proposals, University Avenue will be rebuilt

as a four lane street with turn lanes and on-street parking except at station locations. Approximately \$12.5 million dollars of federal and state funds have been allocated for preliminary planning and engineering of the project, which has a total projected cost of \$840 million. A revised Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is expected to be released sometime in early 2006, which will determine the project's eligibility for federal funding. Depending on funding, construction of the LRT line could begin as early as 2009.



Chapter Three

Methodology

The University Avenue Business Outreach survey was designed and implemented by Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development staff, who worked in conjunction with the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, the Midway Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Corridor Partnership. The purpose of the survey was to get input from businesses about the current state of business on University Avenue as well as their thoughts on the proposed LRT line. The survey was constructed to allow open-ended responses to questions to be categorized, allowing statistical reporting of responses. The survey was completed in three phases, which divided University into three segments beginning at the western end, and was carried out over a period of three months. After obtaining a list of the names and addresses of businesses on University Avenue from a private vendor, PED staff mailed a total of 1,069 surveys to businesses with an address on University Avenue.

The businesses were divided into two groups, those with storefronts on the Avenue, and those located in large office buildings along the Avenue. Surveys were sent to the 509 businesses with storefronts



on University Avenue, informing them that a member of PED staff would be visiting in the following weeks to pick up the survey and address any additional questions or concerns. If the business owner was unavailable or busy, PED staff would leave another copy of the survey for the business owner to complete, or would follow up at another time by visit or by phone. Another 560 surveys were sent to tenants of large office buildings along the Avenue. These business owners

were asked to fill the survey out at their convenience and return it to PED by mail.

Along with the survey, the mailer sent to the businesses included information about the proposed LRT line, as well as information about the Central Corridor Partnership, a business-led advocacy group formed by the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce. PED also made translation services available to Hmong, Vietnamese, Somali, and Spanish-speaking businesses at their request.

Chapter Four

Survey Results

There are approximately 1,000 businesses located along University Avenue from Rice Street to the Minneapolis border. About half of those businesses have storefronts on the Avenue, and the remaining half are tenants in large office buildings, such as Court International, Griggs Midway, and Spruce Tree Center. A mailer that included the survey and information about the proposed LRT line on University Avenue was sent to all 1,000+ businesses. Approximately 120 mailers were returned because the business was no longer located at that address.

PED staff, assisted by staff from the Central Corridor Partnership and Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, personally visited the storefront businesses to pick up completed surveys or conduct interviews with the owners to complete the survey. Staff also answered questions about LRT. If an owner was busy or otherwise

unavailable, survey staff left another copy of the survey with a request to return it when completed. Of the 509 surveys mailed to storefront businesses, 87 were returned as vacant or undeliverable. The survey completion rate for the remaining 422 businesses was 51%.

The large office building tenants were asked to complete the survey and return it by mail. Of the 560 surveys that were sent to tenants of large buildings along the Avenue, 34 were returned as vacant or undeliverable. Of the remaining 526 businesses, 38 surveys were completed and returned to PED. This represents a survey return rate of approximately 7%. The 7% completion rate for the “mail back” survey compared to the 51% completion rate for the “in-person visit” survey illustrates the effectiveness of personal contact in conducting surveys. A total of 253 surveys were completed. A complete breakdown of the survey results follows.



Summary of Results

Question One: Do you own or lease this property?

Of the 253 completed surveys, 231 businesses responded to this question. According to the results, a majority of business owners on University Avenue lease their property with approximately 61% reporting that they lease their property while only about 39% reported owning their property.

Question Two: How many years have you been at this location?

A total of 235 businesses responded to this question. 46% have been at their current location for over ten years while about 32% have been there for less than five years, and approximately 22% have been in their current location between five and ten years.

Question Three: How many employees do you have at this location?

Approximately 34% of the 234 businesses responding to this question reported having three or fewer employees (both full and part-time), 37% had between four and ten, 17% had 11 to 25, and 13% of business had more than 26 employees.

Question Four: Where are most of your customers from?

Of the 244 businesses that responded to this question, a majority reported that most of their business came from more than three miles away. About 62% reported that most customers were from more than three miles away, 30% reported that most were from between one and three miles away, while only 7% reported that most customers were from within a half-mile of the store.

Question Five: Do you have any plans to expand your business within the next three years?

A total of 220 businesses responded to this question. Approximately 60% of these businesses did not plan on expanding within the next three years, while about 40% were planning on expanding.

Question Six: What, if any concerns do you have regarding your current business location?

This question was worded as an open-ended question on the personal visit surveys, while on the surveys sent to tenants of large office buildings respondents were given eight choices, including a fill in the blank “other.” The responses from the personal visit surveys were categorized into the eight different choices given to mail-back respondents. Respondents were also able to list as few or as many concerns as were relevant, and many listed more than one while others listed none. Therefore, percentages will be given as a percentage of total businesses that completed the survey (253), not as a percentage of total responses. The primary concern for most businesses was parking, as almost 40% of surveyed businesses listed parking as a concern. Litter/graffiti/vandalism was the next most common with about 31% of businesses listing it as a concern, followed by robbery or other serious crime at about 27%. In addition, 29% of businesses mentioned a concern that wasn’t included in the eight categories. Common “other” concerns included taxes, traffic, and panhandling. A summarized list of comments can be found at the end of this section.

Question Seven: Do you have any specific business needs at this point in time for this business location?

This question was similar to question six in that businesses could list as few or as many needs as they had. Accordingly, percentages will be listed as a percentage of total businesses that responded to the survey. In accordance with the results of question six, the primary need most businesses had was for more parking with about 26% citing parking as a need. 12% of businesses needed more space, while about 22% listed an “other” need. Other needs as indicated by comments from businesses included lower property taxes and more crime enforcement. A summarized list of comments for this question can be found at the end of this section.

Question Eight: What are your thoughts regarding the proposed Light Rail Transit (LRT) on University Avenue? Please be specific.

Again, with this question respondents were allowed to list as many or as few concerns as they had, so percentages will be listed as a percentage of total businesses that responded to the survey. In addition, responses to this question were divided into two categories: concerns regarding LRT during construction and concerns after construction. The most common concerns during construction included difficult access for customers with 47% of businesses citing it as a concern, followed by a concern about potential long term business loss at 28%. Elimination of on-street parking after construction was a concern for over 27% of businesses, while about 21% were concerned about traffic

congestion after construction. 17% of businesses expected better customer access after construction and only 14% expected an increase in customers following construction. 27% of businesses cited a concern/thought regarding LRT that did not fall into one of the nine categories listed. Some of the most prevalent “other” concerns, according to business owners’ comments, included increased taxes, pedestrian safety, and automobile accidents. A summarized list of comments from question eight can be found at the end of this section.

Question Nine: The Central Corridor Partnership is planning to create a Business Mitigation Council. Would you be interested in more information?

Only 170 of 253 businesses responded to this question, with approximately 69% of those responding indicating an interest in receiving more information about the Central Corridor Partnership.

Question Ten: Overall how satisfied are you with doing business on University Avenue?

In question ten, businesses were given a scale on which to rank their satisfaction ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied including undecided. Of the 215 businesses that responded, 44% reported being “very satisfied” and another 51% reported being “satisfied.” Approximately 4% were undecided, while only about 1% reported being “unsatisfied.”

Attitudes toward LRT on University Avenue

Business owners completing the survey were invited to elaborate on their responses or make additional comments related to any of the questions. These additional comments were either written down by the survey respondent on the survey form, or the comments were paraphrased and recorded by PED staff on the survey form if the survey was conducted in person. Based upon these comments, PED staff attempted to categorize each

respondent's general attitude toward the possibility of LRT on University Avenue. Approximately 28% of those surveyed responded favorably towards the proposed LRT line, 50% were ambiguous or had some questions/concerns regarding LRT, and just under 17% were definitely opposed to LRT. About 6% did not comment on LRT.

Complete Business Survey Results

	Businesses with Storefronts on University	Businesses in Large Office Buildings	Total
Number of surveys mailed to businesses:	509	560	1069
Number of vacant/returned surveys:	87	34	121
Surveys completed:	215	38	253
Survey completion rate:	51%	7%	27%

■ Question 1 – Do you own or lease this property?

	Total	
Own:	89	39%
Lease:	142	61%

Question 2 – How many years have you been at this location?

	TOTAL	
0-5 years	75	32%
5-10 years	51	22%
10 or more	109	46%

Question 3 – How many employees do you have at this location? (both full and part time)

	TOTAL	
3 or fewer employees	79	34%
4 to 10	86	37%
11 to 25	39	17%
26 or more	30	13%

Question 4 – Where are most of your customers from?

	TOTAL	
½ Mile	18	7%
1-3 Miles	74	30%
3 Miles or more	152	63%

Question 5 – Do you have any plans to expand your business within the next 3 years?

	TOTAL	
Yes	89	40%
No	131	60%

Question 6 – What, if any, concerns do you have regarding your current business location?

	TOTAL	
Parking	98	39%
Litter/graffiti/vandalism	78	31%
Robbery/other serious crime	68	27%
Upkeep of adjacent properties	27	11%
Quality of street/sidewalk	23	9%
Condition of building	24	10%
Shoplifting	23	9%
Other	74	29%

Question 7 – Do you have any specific business needs at this point in time for this business location?

	TOTAL	
Parking	66	26%
More Space	30	12%
Façade Improvements	16	6%
Working Capital	20	8%
Structural Improvements	14	6%
Other	55	22%

Question 8 – What are your thoughts regarding the proposed Light Rail Transit (LRT) line on University Avenue?

	TOTAL	
Difficult access for customers during construction	120	47%
Elimination of on-street parking after construction	69	27%
Better customer access after construction	43	17%
Long-term business loss	70	28%
Traffic congestion after construction	53	21%
Increase in customers after construction	36	14%
Proximity to station	29	11%
Limited access for deliveries during construction	46	18%
Other	68	27%

Question 9 – The Central Corridor Partnership is planning to create a Business Mitigation Council. Would you be interested in more information?

	TOTAL	
Yes	118	69%
No	52	31%

Question 10 – Overall how satisfied are you with doing business on University Avenue?

	TOTAL	
Very Satisfied	94	44%
Satisfied	109	51%
Undecided	9	4%
Dissatisfied	3	1%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%

Attitudes toward LRT on University Avenue:

	TOTAL	
Responded favorably toward proposed LRT line	71	28%
Were ambiguous/had some concerns/questions about LRT line	126	50%
Responded unfavorably towards LRT line	42	17%
No opinion	14	6%

Summary of Comments

Question Six: What if any concerns do you have regarding your current business location?

Parking:

- Require more spaces – but no room.
- Friday and Saturday business, not enough parking.
- Traffic jams, no parking, inconvenience for car.
- Change the 30 minute parking on Dunlap St. to two hours or more (5 spaces).
- Lack of good parking.
- Parking for visitors, clients, prospective clients.
- Off-street parking – truck access.
- Nice to have a little more parking.
- Not enough parking – no off street.
- People get ticketed for parking more than two hours – not enough parking close by for employees.
- Back parking – limited street parking with meters. Would like more parking in front.
- Parking tight on street.

Litter/Graffiti/Vandalism:

- Garbage placed in front of building– litter and graffiti.
- Bus stop out front has a lot of trash.
- Things getting better in neighborhood - less graffiti/vandalism.
- Vandalism in alley.
- University is filthy! It'd be nice to see street cleaners/landscaping/greenery.

Robbery/Other serious crime:

- Wife and customer were robbed. Need police patrol?
- Shootings on University Avenue.
- Safety concerns leaving at night.
- Safety concerns, especially in evening, but neighborhood has gotten better over years.
- Cars and trucks broken into - even during the day.
- Kids breaking into cars – police took 25 minutes to arrive. With an accident, police took over an hour to arrive.
- Mugging, intoxication, trespassing, cars broken into.
- Transit oriented crime – passengers of buses (seen it happen)– all passengers doing this. Break windows, litter. Bus stop is a big issue. An employee was mugged.
- Don't like the foot traffic business receives, it's close to two or three bars - lots of drunk people around, loitering; safety a general concern.
- Street people – alcoholics, panhandlers, 2 attempted robberies, assault in back of building, but better lately.
- Prostitution, drug dealing - abated somewhat with Menards. All in all pretty good, police helpful.
- More police presence, area is still “mixed”...perception of being unsafe.
- Keep door locked – busted in and had to put bars up. Last week cut all phone lines. Police came right away, said they would patrol now, but haven't seen them.



Upkeep of Adjacent Properties:

- Signs remain up for closed businesses, clutter, billboards ugly, detract.

Other Comments:

- Taxes.
- Excited about construction at Lexington – north and south sides. Some concerns about evening fights.
- Students harass customers, panhandling, smoking dope, older people scared away from business.
- Liquor store and book store are problematic – “Bath house” in back. Condoms in parking lot, drunks.
- Deterioration of businesses.
- New development without involving the community in decision-making.
- Public transportation.
- Traffic jams.
- Customers are slow to visit business.
- Rising cost of rent, potential loss of free parking.
- Danger in walking across University at Fairview & Prior.
- Business is falling – Target, Walmart grocery sections cutting into business.
- Assessment for sidewalk came at same time as another city fee totaling \$10,000.
- Degenerates, pan-handlers – big problem.

Question 7: Do you have any specific business needs at this point in time for this business location?**Façade Improvements:**

- More/better signage out front. Midway Center also cutting into business.

- No visibility - need more signage or better visibility.

Structural Improvements:

- Building built in 1905 - needs overhaul. 4 apts. above and sink runs over - plaster falls, caves ceiling in. No place to park. Handicapped people would like a sign out front - city said no.
- Interior improvements – cosmetic.

More Space:

- More warehouse space - loading dock.

Parking:

- Would like more short term meters for better turnover.
- Parking for customers.
- Maybe parking lot improvement & maintenance.
- More accessible, volume parking.

Other:

- Would like to see some “cleaning up.”
- Marketing to local businesses, agencies, schools, etc.
- Problems w/internet service, would like direct connection to U. Fiber optic cable down University.
- Need support from area businesses for art projects.
- More upscale, street-level retail space.
- Reduction of property tax.
- Snow removal - piles up from University, city plowing onto boulevard.
- Would like cop on corner during rush hour - terrible congestion.
- More law enforcement.

Question 8: What are your thoughts regarding the proposed Light Rail Transit (LRT) line on University Avenue? Please be specific.

Supportive:

- I am in support of it.
- Supporter of light rail.
- Good station location. Sooner rather than later would be great.
- For LRT.
- Supportive, good – more exposure.
- LRT is good – connect the two cities.
- Support LRT, like Hiawatha line.
- Total support.
- Would be great for our business and our tenants. Our business serves many low income individuals who rely heavily on public transport so any increase would really help them. Our tenants work closely with U of M and the link would really benefit them.
- Probably would raise property values. Would be a good thing.
- Great, can always walk. Great that cities will be connected. Near many hospitals – good location.
- I am fine with bringing in new customers to the area.
- I think it would be a great addition to the area.
- Great – bring in more business. Concern not to aggravate members that still drive.
- For LRT – but questioning location of line. Against middle of the Avenue, want it on right or left.
- It would be fantastic just because it'll be a lot faster for transportation.
- Will be a good asset to neighborhood – will help business with more people coming in.
- Great idea! Great for community.
- Great. I'm not sure how much we'll use it for business because our clients are not typically in the downtowns or on the Avenue, but it will be great for commutes and for going to/from events in the downtowns or the mall. We love it! Spend the big bucks to make it elegant, fast, easy to use, etc. Don't settle for buses.
- The sooner the better!
- Very supportive.
- Good for business generally, more convenient for people in area.
- Good location, better employee access – to downtown and U.
- Generally favorable toward LRT.
- Not too worried about any negative effects from LRT. Thinks it will be a benefit to area.
- Generally supportive but only with specific requirements: financial remediation for business during construction, ample parking, more frequent stops, better north-south connection transit, public hearing involving community residents.
- Great, I'm excited, just worried about short term effect and corporate takeover (no Starbucks).
- It would bring more commerce to the Avenue and be very positive to further develop community infrastructure.
- I think LRT is long overdue.
- No serious concerns – LRT seen as a pure positive!

Unsupportive:

- Oppose: not enough parking, property taxes go up, LRT is too expensive, kids and neighbors running around on street.
- Against LRT.
- Don't really want LRT, would prefer it to be elevated – to save parking, could have positive impact.
- Accidents – serve families with young children, noisy. Don't think it is necessary on University.
- What about temporary day and evening parking for our customers and tenants? From the map, it looks as there will be a terminal right at our intersection. Where will it be placed? Who (what buildings) will have to be torn down? Why not place this choo-choo parallel to 94 then eventually it could be extended all the way to Wisconsin. There are a lot of people in Hudson who would be interested in taking light-rail into the cities if it were available. Sorry, but seems like a waste of valuable taxpayer money for the overall long-term benefits.
- It will be difficult for small businesses.
- 5th building owned on University since 1971 – most convenient for customers who do U-turns at intersection. Concerned about park and riders leaving car in lot. Against LRT. Cannot afford to lose parking spaces, closed intersections. Customers drive to our company from afar because of convenience. One of our tenants will move out if LRT comes in.
- Won't hurt businesses like Wal-Mart and Target; they have parking lots and other stores. Noticed loss of customers.
- Concerned about continued access. Business doesn't rely on neighborhood.
- Afraid will lose 50%. Afraid will go out of business.
- I am worried about the survival of my business due to the possible interruptions on accessibility to my business during construction. I do not see any benefit for me having an LRT line. I think the public will be better served by having the LRT in the middle of I-94. LEAVE UNIVERSITY AVE ALONE!
- Building LRT in the wrong places – should better serve commuters from western suburbs and across the MN River. BRT would be cheaper and more flexible, could take advantage of new technologies for vehicles like hydrogen.
- Don't think it should run down University.
- We do not need light rail transit to be built on University.
- Do not believe in LRT.
- Against LRT on University, no real benefit. Only gain is more passengers. Traffic will not move faster. Not fiscally prudent – too expensive for what benefit we'll get.
- Really opposed, not sure street can handle weight, sink holes.
- Noise and safety a concern – not a big fan, existing buses are OK.
- LRT will destroy business – who cares if building value goes up? Business has higher property taxes than Borders. Concerned about street parking and older customers for dropping off and picking up books – destination business. Construction period will put us out of business. WANT SURVEY RESULTS. Want to stay in neighborhood! Will only help chain stores, put on road with no political power, no business loss reimbursement or for increased property taxes. Not fair, want beautification around area. Currently letting area get blighted. Where are representatives and \$ for “no build option?”

- Not too supportive – concern for lack of users/customers.
- I think LRT on University will be a great thing for suburban commuters and do nothing for biz on University Avenue.
- Don't put it in the middle of University – put in one block north or south.
- I'm nervous. Tearing up the road, what a mess. It would be in this condition for 1-3 years I'm hearing. The noise from the machinery. Our office faces University and it vibrates when a vehicle with a loud stereo system with its windows down waits for the light to change. I can only imagine what this will be like with the loud machinery outside our window all day long.
- University and Snelling – Traffic at this intersection is horrible now. Putting a station here could make it more of a mess!
- You will ruin University Avenue.
- You will turn University Avenue into a condo & coffee street.
- Concern about access and light control – will signal timing be a mess like Hiawatha? Loss of parking, we run a couple hundred funerals a year from this location. Need to cross University to get to north cemeteries like Oakland. Doesn't think LRT will reduce congestion. Should have a spoke system out to suburbs – would like better transit service to Eagan, for example. Idea of mass transit is good but thinks Univ. Ave. bus serves needs.

Additional Comments:

- Suggest keeping property taxes low during construction. How long does it take to build?
- Worried about streets getting cut off – hindrance.
- Long wait for crossing? Will lanes narrow? Increase from those that don't drive.

- Look at safety issues at Snelling/University – many pedestrians. Beef up security. Long term plan for dealing with increased number of people.
- Even Aldi construction has caused some loss of business.
- Thinks it has the potential to relieve traffic on University. City needs better transit system, but not sure how it will affect business.
- Sees long term benefit but somewhat concerned about disruption during construction. Not for or against it. Would like to have some sort of tax break to ease disruption to business.
- Think it could be good or bad, perhaps would be better on 94. Small businesses will suffer during construction.
- My concern is that transportation routes stay open because we rely on public transportation to bring our customers to the store.
- No customers from transit, customers don't come by bus/train.
- Will not benefit but not opposed to LRT – need to keep up with the times.
- Who will cover business loss during construction?
- Congestion comes from people coming from suburbs – so how will LRT help this?
- Concern about a loss of parking and worried about skinny lanes of traffic.
- Have no opinion – don't know advantages or disadvantages.
- Good location, concern how long construction would take, survival through construction. Could be a great thing, big benefit to business after construction. Likes systems in other cities.
- It sounds like a good thing for the area but I'm worried about parking.

- How long will street be shut down or access impaired? Will out to lunch business survive construction?
- How is traffic along Snelling being addressed? How is this projected to change with station there? Not excited about bringing additional concerns into area.
- Is the rail line going to be fenced in? How will they do snow removal? How will people cross street?
- Any buildings removed? Any street expansion/widen street?
- Loitering at stations should be monitored.
- Where will the lots for LRT customers be? Is there parking at the station?
- Problem with traffic congestion at Lake and Hiawatha store.
- Will city close access to streets during construction? Will my property taxes increase?
- If it's on ground it will take width from University and diminish traffic. Snow removal.
- The plan should be well thought out and communicated to community.
- Won't have much of a positive or negative effect on business, but it needs to be done.
- Are the buses still going to run?
- Limit University Ave. to industrial and commercial – keep out residential and churches.
- Location too close – where will people park?
- A concern as to access to side streets off University Ave. Will the rail block present access? If so, how will business be impacted?
- No parking for people who will want to use light rail.
- Ensure good signage and accessibility for handicapped.

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